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GOShaw

Newsletter of the Georgia Ornithological Society
www.gos.org

President's Message

By Jim Ferrari

With the occasional leaf turning bright red on the blackgum trees and the fall warbler migration underway, memories of the scorching record temperatures we experienced in Georgia this June and July are no longer quite so vivid. Think back to earlier this summer, when temperatures were as high as 106°, 108°, or even 109°. The birds were no doubt hunkered down in the heat, but they kept on tending to the business of raising the next generation. This may be stretching the analogy a bit, but GOS was also busy this summer, helping to nurture the next generation . . . of young birders. Camp TALON, a birding camp for teens sponsored by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta Audubon, and GOS, was by all accounts a big success. GOS also sponsored attendance of young birders at the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado and Audubon's Hog Island Camp. See elsewhere in this newsletter for a report about Camp TALON from Bob Sargent as well as essays by the (very enthusiastic) campers themselves.

Just as the birds are on the go during fall migration, GOS has entered our busy season, when we hold two meetings just three months apart, in October and January. This high level of activity follows a six-month lull after the April meeting in Augusta. The upcoming fall meeting on Jekyll Island (October 11-14) promises to be excellent. Kevin Karlson, the noted author, photographer, and shorebird expert, is not only the keynote speaker, but he will also teach a workshop on "Shorebirds by Impression." Graduate student Anna Joy Lehmicke will give a presentation on Seaside Sparrows, plus there will be a research poster session and the usual fantastic field trips. If you have not already registered for the meeting, please do so now. (Look elsewhere in this issue and on our website for meeting specifics.)

The details of the January meeting on Tybee Island are also coming together, and that meeting is looking very promising as well. As we have for five out of the past six years, we will be meeting at the Ocean Plaza Beach Resort. You may be aware of distressing

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Ornithological
Society**

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of the month prior to publication.
Text by e-mail is appreciated.*

Welcome, New Members!

Fledgling

Rosemary Kramer The Rock, GA

Bachman's Sparrow

Roseanne Guerra Marietta, GA
Larry Gridley Albany, GA
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Ann Eggert Alpharetta, GA

Quail Covey

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

GOS FALL MEETING

October 11-14, 2012, Jekyll Island

GOS WINTER MEETING

January 18-21, 2013, Tybee Island

GOS GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES

Bill Terrell Graduate Student Research Grants
December 1, 2012

Bill Terrell Avian Conservation Grants
December 31, 2012

H. Branch Howe, Jr., Graduate Student Research Grants
December 31, 2012

For information about the society's grants, visit <http://www.gos.org/grants/grant.html>

President's Message (continued from page 1)

news reports this summer that the hotel was cited by the Georgia DNR for removing part of a dune adjacent to the hotel. Because GOS is dedicated to conservation of birds and their habitats, the hotel's actions are an affront to the society's values and are disconcerting to our members. Therefore, the GOS leadership wants to be upfront about what happened and how we are responding to the situation. Briefly, Harry Spirides, the CEO of Ocean Plaza, paid workers to illegally remove the dune (30 by 20 feet in area and four to five feet high) behind his hotel last winter, claiming that he did so in order to keep the walkway through the dunes clear of sand. Mr. Spirides admitted to having the dune removed and will pay a \$100 fine to the DNR. Civil penalties could go as high as \$1.5 million, and the hotel will be required to restore the dune as well as the sea oats growing on it. As a member of the Tybee Island Beach Task Force Committee, Mr. Spirides ought to have been well aware of the laws regarding the dunes.

How has GOS responded to this unfortunate news about the Ocean Plaza Beach Resort? After much discussion by members of the Executive Committee, we decided that our best option—one that we are not entirely satisfied with—was to continue to hold the January meeting at the Ocean Plaza Beach Resort. Here is the rationale: If we broke our contract with the hotel, we would be on the hook for about \$7,500. That's \$7,500 less that GOS could then devote to conservation and research grants, scholarships, and other activities. We also investigated other hotel options in the area, but given the late date, they were not ideal. Hotels were either booked, did not have suitable meeting spaces, were in poor locations, or were too expensive. The Executive Committee therefore concluded that the fiscally responsible decision was to honor our contract with the Ocean Plaza Beach Resort. I have written a letter to the hotel management in which I expressed our dismay, reminded them of the substantial impact that birders have on the local economy, and asked that they cooperate with the DNR in restoring the dune to its original state. We will also weigh whether we wish to seek another meeting venue in the future. Finally, we are exploring adding an environmental stewardship clause to future contracts.

I strongly encourage all GOS members, despite the actions of the hotel's management, to attend the meeting on Tybee Island on January 18-20. This is about supporting your society, not a particular hotel. Besides, the birding is always remarkable on Tybee, and we have an outstanding program planned for you. Well-known artist and author Julie Zickefoose will be the keynote speaker, and field trips will hit the beaches, local wetlands, and other great birding habitat. The Tybee meeting traditionally generates an excellent count, averaging about 175 bird species.



I hope to see you at both of our meetings, on Jekyll and Tybee Islands. In the meantime, enjoy the fall bird migration and the first stirrings of autumn weather.

Clapper Rail on Little St. Simons Island.
Photo by Dan Vickers.

Camp TALON 2012: Laughing Gull Madness

By Bob Sargent

The third installment of the Camp TALON road show returned to the coast June 10 to 14, featuring 12 ornithologically obsessed teenagers, Julie “the Tick Snatcher” Duncan, Dan “Don’t Touch My List” Vickers, Danielle “Preparation Is Overrated” Bunch (DNR intern), Cliff “Always on Time” the bus driver, and yours truly, “Mr. Drill Sergeant Sargent.” This was the largest, most artistically talented, and most gifted group of bird song-imitating teens we’ve taught. The vastly outnumbered counselors spent much of the week laughing, despite sleep deprivation. A typical morning at the camp: It’s 5:45 a.m. in a dimly-lit, 28-passenger bus rolling down U.S. Highway 17. I can’t see the kids behind me, but I know that they’re back there because a cacophony of Laughing Gull, Fish Crow, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, and Royal Tern imitations has been pulsing from the darkness for the past 15 minutes, and there’s no prayer of a letup in sight. The “Laughing Gull chant” quickly became a ritual chorus every time we got on the bus, and it was still echoing in my head three days after the camp ended.

This camp’s itinerary was stuffed to the gills with the usual greatest hits, including days spent on Little St. Simons (LSSI) and Sapelo Islands, an evening at Altamaha WMA, and mist netting and stork watching at Harris Neck NWR. We threw in some new wrinkles this time, playing the movie *The Big Year* on the bus’s DVD player during the drive to the coast and spending a day on Cumberland Island. I provided scholarships to two of the teens, and we gave away new binoculars to two of the most improved young birders. Judging by the responses of the teens, it seems fair to assume that the camp’s formula is getting better with each iteration. But that’s not to say that we didn’t encounter some hiccups, such as the monsoon that chased us down the painfully long, almost bird-free beach on Cumberland Island.

Stacia Hendricks, Abby Sterling, and the other LSSI naturalists put on another great show for the teens, guiding us to a singing Painted Bunting moments after we got on the trucks, followed by views of ridiculously immense flocks of ibis and egrets, a handful of Roseate Spoonbills feeding in a shallow pond, and, much to our surprise, a lone Piping Plover at Sancho Panza Beach. Abby gave a presentation about her shorebird research, which was just the beginning of the class sessions that week. Julie taught the teens about journaling, and I gave my usual spiel about how to learn bird songs. Dan talked about using eBird and field guides, Malcolm explained the importance of habitat, and Peter Range and Dot Bam-bach once again captivated the teens with a bird-banding demonstration and a guided behind-the-scenes tour of a wading bird rookery.



Camp TALON participants on Little St. Simons Island.
Photo by Dan Vickers

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Laughing Gull Madness (continued from page 4)

At Cumberland Island, we took refuge from the soggy deluge at a ranger station, where Doug Hoffman graciously gave a spontaneous talk to the students about his efforts to protect nesting bird colonies from predators such as coyotes. The teens quickly learned the importance of paying attention, because we challenged them with three quizzes: bird identification via pictures, identification by songs, and “anything goes” trivia.

Thanks to donations and monetary support from the Atlanta Audubon Society (thank you!) and GOS, we were able to reward the students with a great assortment of prizes, and gave each of them GOS hats and a copy of *Birds of Georgia* by Parrish, Beaton, and Kennedy. Oh, yeah: They also got rewarded with ice cream and pizza stops after hot days in the field, spent an afternoon in the swimming pool at Epworth by the Sea, and splurged on an end-of-the-week breakfast stop at a Waffle House off I-95. Like I said, we’re figuring out what works!



Roseate Spoonbills on Little St. Simons Island.
Photo by Dan Vickers

Thanks again to the leadership of AAS and the DNR staff at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center for their support, to the naturalists and biologists at LSSI, Sapelo Island, Cumberland Island, and Harris Neck NWR, and especially to Julie, Dan, Danielle, Malcolm, and Cliff for making another successful camp possible. Most of all, thank you to the teens for their enthusiasm, for making us laugh, for the special letters and artwork they gave to each of us, and for reminding this old teacher that the future of birding and ornithology is in wonderful hands. I hope to see all of you and your friends again when Camp TALON part four goes to the coast next June.

Go Paperless!

Want to save trees and reduce printing costs by receiving the *GOShawk* electronically? Contact Cathy Ricketts, the GOS membership chairperson, at gosmembership@gmail.com, and let her know that you would like to receive the *GOShawk* by e-mail. Cathy will make sure that you go electronic starting with the December 2012 issue.

BirdFest 2012 Summary

By Unicoi State Park and Lodge

The second Georgia Mountain BirdFest was held at Unicoi State Park and Lodge from May 3 to May 6, 2012. The conference was a success, with 110 participants, 30 speakers/leaders, and 20 who attended the keynote dinner. The conference was a great collaborative effort and an example of partnerships between multiple agencies. The event is sponsored by the Friends of Unicoi. This year, the Georgia Ornithological Society (GOS) sponsored the keynote speaker and offered promotions for the event. The Atlanta Audubon Society (AAS) sponsored the event with in-kind donations, including marketing promotions, providing speakers and leaders for the event, and donating shade-grown coffee for the entire conference.

During the conference, there were more than 60 seminars and field trips offered, with speakers and leaders from multiple government agencies, including Parks Division, Nongame Conservation Section of Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There were also many other experts from organizations such as T.E.R.N., Leica Sport Optics, Birding Adventures, Thru Nature's Eyes Photography, Georgia's Important Bird Areas, The Birder's Library website, and Little St. Simons Island.

The partnerships were key to making this year a success, specifically with the Friends of Unicoi. Friends were instrumental in assisting with the financial process, allowing the park to manage registration fees through RegOnline. They also provided volunteer labor. The volunteers assisted as van drivers, moderators to introduce speakers, help at the registration desk, and at the Friends table. The Friends of Unicoi had various bird-related items (such as bird whistles, bird clocks, visors, and plush birds) to sell and raffle during the event as their own fundraising effort, grossing more than \$700.

To have the support of such important bird organizations in Georgia as GOS and AAS enhanced the Georgia Mountain BirdFest's reputation. GOS sponsored the keynote speaker, Joe Duff of Operation Migration, Inc. Mr. Duff originally requested \$3,500 for his speaking engagement but later accepted the offer of \$1,500 from GOS/Unicoi. The funds will go directly back to Operation Migration to further support the conservation work their organization does for the birding community. Unicoi could not afford such a high quality speaker were it not for this year's GOS support. In addition, the current GOS president attended as a participant and plans to discuss future partnerships with BirdFest and GOS. The past and current AAS presidents were also speakers, and the executive director of AAS and several other AAS employees attended as participants, which also will promote this future partnership.

Unicoi conceived BirdFest in 2011 in an effort to host a high-quality event in order to gain revenue from "heads in beds" and to attract a new user group or first-time visitors.

A few other highlights to the 2012 Georgia Mountain BirdFest were that a majority of the attendees were new visitors to Unicoi, and there were six states represented and three countries, making this year's event an international one. In 2011 BirdFest was the first event/program that the Parks Division provided in which teachers could earn PLUs (professional learning units). This was offered again in 2012, with two teachers getting credits.

What Is Earth Share of Georgia?

By Mark Beebe

GOS is an active member of Earth Share of Georgia and receives funds from them to support GOS functions and activities.

Its website states that Earth Share of Georgia plays a vital role in promoting environmental education, volunteerism and charitable giving by partnering with businesses across Georgia. Since its founding in 1992, employees across the state have generously pledged their financial support and time to the important work of Earth Share's seventy member organizations. These contributions are growing exponentially as more and more businesses move to place the environment alongside United Way and other approved charities as a key recipient of annual employee payroll pledges. Earth Share now participates in more than ninety government and corporate campaigns including Home Depot, Primerica, Worldspan, Emory University, Turner, City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.

Earth Share of Georgia was originally incorporated as the Environmental Fund for Georgia. In 2001, the Environmental Fund for Georgia became a state partner of Earth Share, the nation's oldest and largest environmental workplace fundraising organization. Now, thanks to this partnership, Earth Share of Georgia represents not only the best of Georgia's environmental organizations, but the most reputable in the nation, as well.

In addition to workplace giving campaigns, Earth Share plays a pivotal role as a communication and coordination nucleus. Its centralized website, offering up-to-date environmental news and events, and Down to Earth Day, an annual Atlanta celebration in honor of Earth Day, support Earth Share of Georgia's ultimate goal of promoting a healthy environment and an active citizenry.

Earth Share of Georgia offers citizens one smart and simple way to care for our air, land and water. For a complete list of partnering businesses and member charities, visit www.earthsharega.org



Camp TALON 2012: A Secret to Keep

By John Patten Moss

I would like to start this article by saying how much I appreciate my Camp TALON experience and all that went into making it. The vast array of knowledge encompassed in the program made it so enjoyable to a nature lover like myself. As the camp is geared mainly towards birding, people of similar interests and all skill levels can also benefit from the experience. The resources compiled into one five-day, four-night camp include knowledgeable guides who can answer almost any question that one may have to ponder and wonderful habitats that vary from beaches and dunes to maritime forests and managed pine forests. It is truly difficult to not find an appreciation for such treasures.

The camp that I attended took place on Georgia's incredible barrier islands. Some of the islands included in the expeditions are St. Simons Island, Little St. Simons Island, Sapelo Island, and Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, which is located on Georgia's mainland. Because most of these areas are mostly pristine locations that house many important species (birds and all), the camp learned how to be careful not to disturb any important wildlife site, from a turtle nest to a bird nest. Learning such values certainly is important to pass on to the new generation so that such gems can be enjoyed by generations to come.

The intense effort of all of the chaperones to organize the best camp within their capabilities certainly paid off, in my opinion. I just hope that the other campers had as much of an exquisite experience as I had. After all, it is not every day that you can hop outside to stumble across such beauties as Roseate Spoonbills, Piping Plovers, and Clapper Rails. Being that I do not want to spoil the surprises for future Camp TALON participants, I am going to keep secret some of the other birds that can be encountered.



Camp TALON participants on Cumberland Island. Photo by Dan Vickers.

My happiness for this experience can hardly be expressed in an article, but the idea should be planted into many heads. This whole commitment for me has been such a wonderful idea that I believe others should experience it for themselves. Now armed with priceless knowledge that I hope to pass on as well, I feel much more prepared to go into the field with any other ornithologists or botanists or even appreciators of that kind. I hope to join everyone again next year so that I may continue to feed my desire to learn.

Camp TALON 2012: Two Rare Birds

By Rosemary Kramer

This is an awesome camp. I have enjoyed myself the past times that I've gone, and again cannot wait until next year's camp. I saw several lifers and two rare birds, the Gray Kingbird and the Piping Plover, which was supposed to be at the Great Lakes by June! I loved being around other birders as well, because for me that doesn't happen often. Thanks to everyone for this great experience, and I hope that other young birders that haven't been before, will, because I guarantee that you will enjoy it!

Camp TALON 2012: Black Bill Peeking

By Ethan Hatchett

This has been the second year that I have attended Camp TALON. It gets better and better each year. On the way down to the coast, we watched the movie *The Big Year*, which I thought was a very clever way to set the mood for the entire trip.

On this trip, I spent time learning about terns. Living in the middle of the state, I don't get to spend a lot of time experiencing them. It was nice to have an experienced birder point out subtle field marks that I had never really noticed before. Also, I saw two new "life birds" on this trip: the Gray Kingbird and the Piping Plover.

Cumberland Island was a new addition to our itinerary and was a really great trip. We explored the south end of the island on foot. Cumberland is teeming with life. From its speckled, Fallow Deer to its Palamedes Swallowtails, there is always something interesting to see. One of my fondest memories of the trip was when we ventured upon a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher's nest. When I looked in the scope, I saw only its thin, black bill just barely peeking over the nest. It was a very amusing sight.

Another great aspect of their camp is meeting birders from all over. It is also great to see old friends as well. Different from last year, we had a lot of experienced birders, and that made things more interesting. For example, the wide array of bird calls was impressive. One of the most notable was the Laughing Gull. Also, sleep deprivation and creativity created some mythical creatures, such as the Sporkbill.

Overall, Camp TALON is a fantastic experience, and I encourage anyone who is even remotely interested in ornithology to attend. I would also like to thank all of the wonderful chaperones, our bus driver, Epworth by the Sea, all the instructors, Camp TALON's sponsors, and Bob Sargent for making this program happen.



Summer Tanager on Little St. Simons Island. Photo by Dan Vickers.

Hog Island 2012: The “Maine” Objective

By Hunter Hebenstreit

As the jet touched down on the runway in Portland, Maine, there was just one thought on my mind: Puffins. I had received a scholarship from the Georgia Ornithological Society and was in the Pine Tree State to attend the Audubon Society’s Hog Island teen camp. Although my “maine” objective was to see puffins, I left with so much more than another checkmark on my life list.

The first thing that hit me when I arrived in Maine was the fact that everything was so green. The forests were wet and vibrant, filled with ferns, lichens, and mosses. The air had a freshness to it that’s hard to find in Georgia, and it echoed with the songs of nesting birds. Birds that we normally only see during migration were there building nests and raising families; birds such as Veery, Northern Parula, and Black-throated Green Warbler. On one day we had the chance to band some of these birds, getting amazing close-up views of them. It was an amazing experience!

We made several trips to the mainland as well, where not only the birds were amazing but also the insects. I found many species of butterflies that were quite new to me, things that we don’t see in Georgia, such as Silver-bordered Fritillary and Harris’s Checkerspot. The northern marshes were filled with many dragonflies and damselflies that I had never seen, like Sedge Sprite and Frosted Whiteface. These were accompanied by great marsh birds such as Virginia Rail, Nelson’s Sparrow, and Sora.



Nesting Northern Parula. Photo by Hunter Hebenstreit.

I have to say that the best experience of the trip was the boat ride out to Eastern Egg Rock. Located about six miles off the coast, it is the birthplace of Project Puffin, an organization started by Stephen Kress and the Audubon Society to restore nesting puffins to their former breeding grounds in Maine. Eastern Egg Rock now supports a sizeable breeding colony of Atlantic Puffins. On the trip out to the island, we spotted seabirds such as Manx Shearwater (which I sadly missed) and Wilson’s Storm-Petrel. Once we got out to the island, we were overwhelmed. Not only were the comical puffins everywhere, but there were also razor-bills and guillemots on the island. Three species of tern nested on the island; Arctic, Common, and the Roseate Tern, which is a federally endangered species. It was great to be able to see how the project has succeeded in restoring puffin populations as well as many other species of seabirds.

I was understandably reluctant to leave at the end of the week. I had seen some incredible birds, made some great new friends, and eaten some amazing food. (The chef on the island was a culinary genius, to say the least. Second helpings were a must.) It was an experience unlike any other, one that I highly recommend to any young person with an interest in nature. So what are you waiting for? Pack your bags and head to Maine! The puffins are waiting.

My Experience at the Audubon Society's Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens

By Ben Thesing

When I first received news that I would be one of three recipients of the scholarship from the Georgia Ornithological Society to attend the Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens on Hog Island, Maine, I was absolutely ecstatic. Truthfully, I wasn't entirely sure of what to expect of the camp, as it would be an entirely new experience for me.

Stepping off the plane, I was full of excitement that would be fulfilled during the coming week. After exiting the aircraft, I made my way down to baggage claim to meet with Jamie, who was holding a sign that read "Hog Island Camp." She would be the one to drive us an hour and a half to the boat dock on Muscongus Bay, where the island itself was located. On the drive there, six other teens and I started birding all the way to the island, pointing out Ospreys, egrets, and even the inconspicuous pigeon! I was really starting to enjoy the company of kids my age who have the same passion for birds as I do. In fact, throughout the entire week, we spoke about and discussed numerous topics related to the natural world: snakes, lichen, butterflies, and even small invertebrates that reside in the tide pools that polka-dot the rocky shores of Hog Island at low tide. By the end of the trip, the natural world had brought us together, and we had become very comfortable around each other.



Ben Thesing holding a Black-throated Green Warbler. Photo courtesy Ben Thesing.

After the debriefing about the week, we were given free time before dinner to mill about the common area and get settled. My new friends and I were exploring, taking pictures, and chortling over the Northern Parula nest that was in a low hanging branch right beside one of the main trails. The perky little warblers had crafted a tightly woven nest of the Old Man's Beard Lichen that draped the spruce tree. It, along with the Osprey nest near the boathouse, were two of the main attractions during "down" time. Not long after we had discovered the Parula nest, my equal passion for reptiles kicked in when I caught a Maritime Garter Snake as it swiftly slithered through the moss and Hay-Scented Ferns that carpeted the understory of the spruce forests. I was overjoyed to find a snake within an hour or so of physically standing on the island. Soon after, the bell on the island rang twice, which signaled the time for supper. We let the serpent make its way off into the undergrowth and gathered at "the bridge" (as the building was named) to dine on superb food prepared by Chef Yonnie. Every night, following dinner, there would be a presentation by one of the camp instructors on something related to birds (the first night happened to be the history of Hog Island).

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My Experience (continued from page 11)

After each excellent presentation, the 15 other teens and I retreated back to our sleeping quarters, given the clever nickname of “Crow’s Nest” (as our teen group was entitled “the Corvids”). We settled in for the night and fell into a sound sleep to the melodic songs strummed on a guitar by one of our two counselors, Heather Richards.

We were awakened the next morning at 5:45 to go on an early-morning bird walk led by a few of the counselors. This pattern of morning birding was repeated throughout the week and was greatly enjoyed by everyone, especially myself. These excursions included the sightings of a swift, stealthy Merlin, singing Black-throated Green Warblers, and the tingling, melodic, and emphatic song of the Hermit Thrush, its notes ringing through the woodland. This birding was incredible, especially with the early morning light breaking over the saltwater horizon, gleaming its way through the beautifully tangled mess of spruce trees and ferns. I greatly enjoyed the ecosystems in which we hiked. Our boots and shoes became wet with the early-morning dew as we carefully padded through thick mats of sphagnum moss.

Those early-morning hikes certainly weren’t the end of the birding fun. Mornings and afternoons were consumed by various field trips to premier birding locations, both on the mainland and to other islands in Muscongus Bay. One birding location on the mainland was McCurdy Road, where we sighted a Black-and-white Warbler, a Canada Warbler, various other species, and a Northern Waterthrush, which was a life bird for most of the group. The mainland birding expeditions also included a few other marshy tracts of land, such as one preserved by the Damariscotta River Association (DRA), where I got a lifer Black-billed Cuckoo. Mainland birding adventures held the sightings of Broad-winged Hawks, Swamp Sparrows, Lesser Yellowlegs, Alder and Willow Flycatchers, Nelson’s Sparrows and various species of butterflies and dragonflies, as well as the occasionally frog species. Looking for wonderful ornithological creatures far extended beyond the mainland. One morning, the teen group broke up into two groups of eight, the “Stellars” and the “Magpies.” My group, the “Stellars,” did a hike along the trails of Hog Island itself. This was one of my favorite trips, as we hiked along trails that wound their way through fields of Hay-Scented Ferns that were shadowed by the looming red and white spruces. On this hike we saw Black-Throated Green Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, and a Merlin, which were all life birds



Campers at Hog Island. Photo courtesy Hunter Hebenstreit.

for me. On this particular hike, I really enjoyed learning more about my group of “Stellars,” as we all got along incredibly well. The afternoon of that day was where the big event occurred—the one we had all been waiting for—the boat trip out to Eastern Egg Rock to see the nesting Atlantic Puffins. The “Stellars” and I boarded the converted lobster boat along with another adult group, and we motored out in great anticipation. The boat ride eight miles out into the bay seemed longer than an hour, with the waves lapping against the boat and rocking it every which way. However, it was worth it. A few of us even got the rare sighting of a Manx

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My Experience (continued from page 12)

Shearwater that darted low above the rolling ocean. The moment we got out to Eastern Egg Rock, Roseate, Common, and Arctic Terns were circling their way onto the nesting site. Atlantic Puffins darted to and fro as well as perched upright on rocky outcroppings of the small islands. My favorite bird, however, was the lone Razorbill that stood regally on one rock overlooking a flock of Double-crested Cormorants fanning their wings. It was truly an amazing sight to see. We were all disappointed to leave Eastern Egg Rock, but overjoyed to have seen such amazing birds. On the way back, we reminisced about the experience while Wilson's Storm Petrels bobbed, bounced, swerved, and glided over the ocean swells. Though Eastern Egg Rock was the highlight of the week, many other amazing activities regarding birds and birding also took place. One of my absolute favorites was bird-banding with master bander, Sara Morris. During this session, we banded a Black-throated Green Warbler that I even got to hold and release! Another, absolutely phenomenal experience was getting to go birdsong recording with accomplished nature sound recorder, Lang Elliot. I personally recorded a Brown Creeper as it whistled its perky melody high up in the treetops. This, however, required awakening at 3:30 a.m., but once I got out into the wilderness and heard the glassy, melodic, peaceful song of the Hermit Thrush as its music danced through the forest, it was worth the screaming alarm at daybreak.

Overall, this camp was one of the most amazing experiences of my life, and I'm incredibly glad to have been able to partake in the magnificent learning opportunity. I made so many excellent new friends throughout the week, with whom I will stay connected for a long time. The birding was fantastic, and the overall experience even more so. I would easily do it again in a hummingbird's wing beat, given the chance.



Winter Meeting Preview Tybee Island, Georgia January 18-21, 2013

The keynote speaker will be Julie Zickefoose. Her presentation will be **LIFESTYLES OF THE SMALL AND COLORFUL: THE EASTERN WOOD WARBLERS**. Wood warblers are tropical birds that, over eons, learned to fly farther and farther north to breed. While it may spend three months on the breeding grounds, a wood warbler spends the other

nine in transit and residing on the wintering grounds. In this illustrated lecture, Julie explores the enormous importance that migration has in shaping warbler lifestyles, foraging strategies, and even physiognomy.

Julie will also do a workshop presentation on Friday afternoon on **ENJOYING BIRD FEEDING MORE**. This presentation will demonstrate how to set up the ideal feeding station, profile the many different feeders and foods, from hopper to hummingbird feeders, and sunflower seed to crushed eggshell.



The Friday night speaker will be Abby Sterling, of Little St. Simons Island, discussing her work with Wilson's Plovers and American Oystercatchers.

Camp Colorado 2012: Three Important Lessons

By Marshall Weber

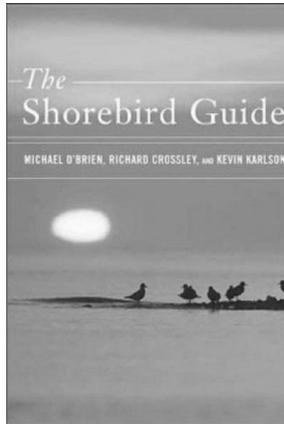
I had the great pleasure of visiting Estes Park in Colorado for five days this July for the American Birding Association camp for young birders. The camp was tons of fun, and the quality of the instructors made it all the more enjoyable. There were quite a few leaders there who brought different areas of expertise, and all of them had a great attitude. Bill Stewart, director of the camp, had a wealth of knowledge and a long-time desire to work with and support young birders. The ABA president, Jeffrey Gordon, and his wife, Liz Gordon, also spent a few days with us before sadly having to depart. Jeff's commitment to and enthusiasm about birding and his confidence with identification and Liz's true appreciation of all nature and her outgoing attitude showed the whole time they were with us. Also there to make the experience all the more enjoyable were close to 18 campers who all had smiles on their faces and were so much fun to get to know and to talk to about their birding adventures.

To ensure that everyone would see the widest variety of bird species, we visited a number of different habitats. On the first day, we visited ponderosa pine forests and sub-alpine habitat at Endo Valley and Beaver Meadows in Rocky Mountain National Park. The second day brought completely new habitats as we visited Pawnee National Grasslands in the morning and the Pawnee Buttes in the afternoon for rocky foothill habitat. We spent the morning of day three at about 11,000 feet, doing some alpine birding and then watched a banding demonstration at Estes Park in the afternoon. Day four was the day we had pretty much all of the instructors together. We went to Phantom Canyon Nature Preserve in the morning and riparian habitats like Lee Martinez Park for our last full day of birding. The final day we stopped on the way to the airport in some riparian and scrubland habitats. Over all, the bird diversity was simply astounding and the camp total was around 130 species. Even though all individual birds are special, some highlights include White-tailed Ptarmigan, Red Crossbill, Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Mountain Plover, Burrowing Owl, Common Nighthawk, Horned Lark, McCown's Longspur, Canyon Wren, Cassin's Finch, Green-tailed Towhee and many others.

In conclusion, this camp is an amazing experience I will remember for the rest of my life, and I am extremely thankful that the GOS made it possible for me to attend such a wonderful camp. I learned many cool facts about birds as I spent time at such a beautiful place, but I believe there were three more important things that I learned. The first thing that was super important is that we were taught to be more than birdwatchers, to do more than simply watch birds. We were taught to learn about bird conservation and find out about opportunities in our area to help the birds we love to watch (and listen to). The second thing is the friendships I made with the other teens and the instructors. Only one of the 18 or so campers and one of the instructors lives close to me, but with Facebook and e-mail I can keep in touch with all of them! The final important concept I learned is to appreciate all of nature and not just birds. So many birders simply take note of the birds they see and not the other organisms. I am now much more aware of all of my natural surroundings, and I owe it all to the GOS, the ABA, and delightful Colorado!



Marshall Weber birding in Colorado.
Photo courtesy Marshall Weber.



Fall 2012 Meeting

October 11-14, 2012
Villas by the Sea
Jekyll Island, Georgia

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER
KEVIN KARLSON**



Kevin is an accomplished birder, professional tour leader, and wildlife photographer who has published numerous articles on bird identification and natural history for an assortment of magazines, books, and journals. A former photo editor for *North American Birds*, he currently writes the "Birder's ID" column for *WildBird* magazine. Kevin is a co-author of *The Shorebird Guide* and is currently completing a new book for the Roger Tory Peterson Reference series called *Birding by Impression*.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

"Birds on the Wind: The Miracle of Migration"

Bird migration is truly one of the most amazing natural wonders in our world today. From the unbelievable 7,000-mile, non-stop journeys of Bar-tailed Godwits to spectacular raptor concentrations during migration, there are still many unanswered questions about the movements of migratory birds. The program begins with a review of different types of bird migration before highlighting various bird families and select species that perform amazing feats of physical endurance during their bi-annual journeys. Breathtaking photos and several musical interludes add to the interesting nature of this presentation. This light-hearted program appeals to birders and non-birders alike.

Workshop: Shorebirds by Impression, with Kevin Karlson

This short indoor workshop presents an alternate approach to shorebird identification. It encourages an initial evaluation of physical impressions to form a surprisingly accurate foundation for your ID conclusion before analyzing feather details or plumage patterns. By concentrating on the size, body shape and structural features of each bird, a reliable set of non-changeable impressions is formed for each species, unaffected by the many plumage conditions found throughout the year for most shorebirds. The indoor workshop will be held on Friday, October 12th from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$10, and advanced registration is required.



Twenty-four participants will have the opportunity to put these skills to the test on the next day's field trip to Andrews Island Causeway and Gould's Inlet, which will be led by Kevin.

Hotel Details

Villas by the Sea Resort & Conference Center
1175 N. Beachview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527
www.jekyllislandga.com

Room Rates:

Studio Villa - \$99
One-Bedroom Villa - \$119 Islandside/\$129 Oceanside
Two-Bedroom Villa - \$149 Islandside/\$159 Oceanside
Three-Bedroom Villa - \$179 Islandside/\$189 Oceanside

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Annual membership rates for individuals and families:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-cockaded Woodpecker (Patron) | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fledgling (Students only) | \$15 |

Life Membership Rates for individuals:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Northern Goshawk | \$450 |
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Yes, I would like to make an additional contribution of \$ _____ in support of GOS and its programs.